**Herbs and Spices**

**Shop and Save**
- In bulk foods, you can buy a small amount to use while the flavor is strongest. Or try something new.
- Check for a “BEST by” date on packaged spices and herbs. They are still safe after the date but the flavor will be weaker.
- Fresh herbs should be a color typical for the herb. Avoid wilted or yellowed leaves.
- If you garden, grow some herbs. Try basil, parsley, chives and others in the ground or a container.

**Fresh or Dried?**
Both fresh and dried herbs add flavor. Adjust amounts to your taste.

- **Most Herbs:**
  - 3 teaspoons fresh = 1 teaspoon dried

- **Garlic:**
  - 1 clove fresh = ¼ teaspoon garlic powder

- **Ginger:**
  - 1 teaspoon fresh ginger root = ¼ teaspoon ground ginger powder

**Store Well, Waste Less**
- Store dried herbs and spices in a cool, dark location away from direct heat or sunlight. Keep containers tightly closed.

- **Whole dried spices keep their flavor for up to 4 years; ground spices for 2 to 3 years and dried herbs for 1 to 3 years. Smell them to check for strength of flavor.**
- **Refrigerate fresh herbs like parsley, basil or cilantro upright in a glass of water like flowers. Cover with a loose plastic bag.**
- **Wash fresh herbs just before using by pushing up and down in a bowl of water; lift out of the water; repeat in fresh water until no dirt appears in the bowl.**
- **Freeze fresh herbs and use in cooked dishes within one year. Remove clean, dry leaves from main stems, spread on a tray and freeze. Package in freezer quality container labeled with the herb’s name and date.**
Using Herbs and Spices

Homemade Seasoning Blends
Mix ingredients well and store in an airtight container.

Taco Seasoning
3 Tablespoons garlic powder
3 Tablespoons onion powder
6 Tablespoons chili powder
3 Tablespoons paprika
1 Tablespoon black pepper

Optional:
3 Tablespoons cumin
4 ½ teaspoons dried oregano
Red pepper flakes to taste

Makes 1 cup without optional ingredients.
2 Tablespoons = one packet (1.25 ounces) taco seasoning mix

Soulful Seasoning (salt free)
3 Tablespoons onion powder
4 Tablespoons garlic powder
1 Tablespoon ground red pepper
1 Tablespoon chili powder
1 Tablespoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 teaspoons ground thyme

Makes ¾ cup
Use with vegetables and meats.

Pumpkin Pie Spice
2 Tablespoons cinnamon
1 Tablespoon ginger
1 ½ teaspoons nutmeg
1 ½ teaspoons cloves

Makes 4 Tablespoons

Pumpkin Fruit Dip
Ingredients:
1 can (15 ounce) pumpkin (about 1 ¾ cups cooked pumpkin)
1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese or plain yogurt or low-fat cream cheese
¾ cup sugar (or less to taste)
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

Directions:
1. In a medium bowl, combine pumpkin, ricotta cheese (or yogurt or cream cheese), pumpkin pie spice.
2. Add sugar a little at a time to reach desired sweetness. Stir until smooth.
3. Serve with fresh fruit dippers like apple slices, bananas or grapes.
4. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
Makes 3 cups
Prep time: 5 minutes

Hummus Dip (no tahini)
Ingredients:
1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
¼ cup nonfat plain yogurt
¼ teaspoon garlic powder or 1 clove garlic
¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon ground cumin

Directions:
1. For a smooth texture, blend all ingredients in a blender. For a less smooth texture, mash beans with a fork until they are as smooth as you like. Mix with other ingredients.
2. If hummus seems too thick, add 2 teaspoons of water.
3. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
Makes 2 cups
Prep time: 5 minutes

When kids help make healthy food, they are more likely to try it. Show kids how to:
- measure and mix ingredients together.
- wash and cut up fruits and vegetables for dipping.